

CHALLENGE



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NO SAFE SCHOOLS UNDER CAPITALISM

CHICAGO, February 17—Scores of working-class parents over the past month have fought together in bold opposition to the bosses' racist lose-lose scenario for school reopenings. Sharply attacked by the profit system, they are collectively pushing struggles that prioritize greater working-class safety and a better future for youth.

Some of the fiercest leadership is coming from Latin workers, organizing out of schools where members of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) have helped build class struggle against the bosses. We have been proud to fight alongside many of them and inject communist politics and multiracial unity into the militant campaigns.

Lose-lose scenario

The majority of parents, education workers, and students know that they are stuck between a rock and a hard place. From harsh experience they understand there is absolutely zero reason to trust that Chicago Public Schools (CPS) are looking out for the interest of students, after decades of allowing schools in mostly Black and Latin neighborhoods fall to pieces.

On the other hand, they acknowledge the reality that remote learning is profoundly failing working-class students and worsening the already disgusting racist educational inequalities present under capitalism.

The truth is, the bosses have no real interest in genuinely educating or protecting the health of the international working class. To them, the push for school reopening is directly connected to fascistic political control and the profit necessities of their system.

Our Party's revolutionary role is to point out their deadly plans for our class, continuing to fight and win more workers to see that a communist future is the only one worthy and sustainable for our class.

When bosses attack, unite and fight back

Throughout this winter, officials from CPS have been steadily increasing pressure to get education workers and students physically back in the classroom. Citing often contradictory health data and pledges to update ventilation and sanitation



in the buildings, they were able to get a small percentage of grade-school aged children and education workers back for in-person instruction in early January.

Their insistent approach provoked major pushback from the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) which increased organizing efforts of rank-and-file teachers to defy demands to return to in-person instruction until more safety concerns could be met.

It also motivated Latin working-class parents

and PLP members to organize a multiracial picket in front of a CPS elementary school on the west side of the city on January 15.

Although in many ways they have seen themselves excluded from the debate about reopening, Latin working-class families have every reason to want to fight back. They have been the second hardest hit citywide during the pandemic, with close to 1,400 dead from Covid-19 (South Side

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JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

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OUR FIGHT

- ★Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.
- ★The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today’s world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.
- ★Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world’s workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.
- ★While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim “communism is dead,” capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.
- ★Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society’s benefits and burdens.
- ★Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of “race.” Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.
- ★Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.
- ★Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.
- ★Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion’s false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.
- ★Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

CONTACT US

Email
desafio.challenge@gmail.com

Mail
Box 808 GPO, Brooklyn, NY 11202

Internet
www.plp.org

Twitter, Facebook, Instagram:
@PLPchallenge

WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP’s criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a “following” around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual’s writing of an article.

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Editorial

The only solution is communist revolution!

Bosses’ dogfight in Myanmar: racists vs. racists

Thousands of workers in Myanmar (also called Burma) have taken to the streets in defiance of the Tatmadaw, the tuggish military that has ruled the country for most of the last 60 years. In a February 1 coup, the Tatmadaw ousted the racist civilian misleader, Aung San Suu Kyi, and her NLD (National League for Democracy) Party. Protesters are demanding her release from prison and a return to democracy. But make no mistake about it, democracy will never liberate the working class from the horrors of capitalism.

Under class society, the ruling class dictates to everyone else. Under capitalism, a capitalist dictatorship rules for maximum profit and power for the few by exploiting the international working class. “Democratic” elections are a sham the liberal bosses use to hide the coercion and violence of their rule. We must fight for a workers’ dictatorship—for communism. Only then will workers have any control over society and their lives.

The current conflict in Myanmar, one of poorest countries in Asia, is between two enemies of the working class. It’s a fight over which group of bosses will rule the country and line their pockets with profits stolen from workers. It’s also a fight over which imperialist power Myanmar will align with—China or the U.S.? What’s happening in this small, impoverished country is part of a worldwide trend toward fascism and world war.

Workers should take no side in fights between bosses. Backing either side leads our class into the arms of the mass-murdering capitalist ruling class. We have a better alternative. Let’s channel the mass militancy workers have shown in the streets, defying curfew and dodging bullets and water cannons, to organize an international communist movement to smash this racist profit system once and for all!

Inter-imperialist rivalry and rising instability

Myanmar is an important puzzle piece in the sharpening rivalry between China and the U.S. The military’s takeover “pits the foreign-policy strategies of the two powers against each other. And it thrusts Myanmar on to the front lines of an increasingly tense geopolitical competition for global leadership” (WSJ, 2/2).

For China, Myanmar is a big part of its Belt and Road Initiative, a strategy to expand China’s influence throughout Asia, Africa, Europe, and Oceania, the continent dominated by Australia. The Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Corridor gives China an overland alternative to shipping oil and gas through the vulnerable Strait of Malacca. It also reflects the steep decline of U.S. power in Southeast Asia. “The Chinese government... sees the coup as ‘a moment of opportunity’ to undercut the inroads the United States and other Asian nations made during Myanmar’s halting democratic opening” (NYT, 2/5).

What with the Donald Trump disaster, massive unemployment, and a bungled response to the Covid-19 pandemic by Republicans and Democrats alike, the U.S. is in disarray. It has long since lost its claim to any “moral” superiority. The new Joseph Biden administration may escalate sanctions against the Myanmar generals to try to bring back Suu Kyi, who’d been somewhat friendly with the U.S. while keeping her options open with China. But according to the Wall Street Journal (2/2), “...additional U.S. sanctions will have only marginal impact on the Burmese military....” With China and other Asian trade partners in hand, the Tatmadaw has little to fear from U.S. threats.

In short, U.S. liberal democracy is rapidly losing ground. The January 6 Capitol riot exposed the bosses’ biggest immediate problem, the split within their own class. Before they take on China, where the rulers have the advantage of open fascism, they must get their house in order: a prescription for more open fascism in the U.S.

Lessons from Myanmar: Imperialism is deadly and nationalism a dead-end

The “pro-democracy” protests in Myanmar are only the most recent chapter in a long history of Myanmar workers being misled and betrayed by various factions of the ruling class. Aung San, Suu Kyi’s father, a founder of the Communist Party (CP) of Burma in the late 1930s, is considered the “Father of Burma” for his leadership in gaining independence from Britain. During World War II, according to Martin Smith’s book, Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity (Bloomsbury Academic, 1991), the CP of Burma made the huge mistake of allying with their former colonizers, the British. Aung San challenged this strategy and called instead for an alliance with the Japanese fascists, who were calling for “Asia for Asians.” Workers who’d once fought for communism were derailed into fighting to protect ruling class power. As the world’s bosses position for a new and wider war, they will continue to drum up nationalism to win workers to fight and kill other workers. We must turn the guns around and defend the international working class against capitalism.

Ruling class disunity leads to coup

Workers in Myanmar have long lived under brutal military rule. British imperialism “...rearranged the nation’s ethnic and racial hierarchies in order to best extract profit...” (Foreign Affairs, May/June 2020). After achieving independence in 1948, Myanmar’s military held mostly unchallenged power until 2011, when they entered a power-sharing arrangement with Suu Kyi’s civilian party. Mimicking their colonizers’ racist brutality, they orchestrated the genocide against Rohingya Muslims.

Atrocities against the Rohingya included mass killings, “babies thrown to their deaths, mass rapes, whole villages burned to cinders....Thousands of Rohingya have been killed and three quarters of a million driven into a squalid exile in neighboring Bangladesh” (NYT, 12/11/19). To stay in power, Suu Kyi alternately denied the military’s racist atrocities and defended them as a campaign against “insurgents or terrorists” (NYT, 12/11/19). But the two sides fell out when the NLD won recent elections by a landslide, and the military felt their control could be in jeopardy.

Suu Kyi, racist liberal misleader

The open brutality of Myanmar’s military is obvious. But liberal rulers like genocide apologist Suu Kyi are even more dangerous for the working class. Lauded by the world’s liberal bosses for her commitment to “democracy,” Suu Kyi won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991.

Like Russia’s Alexei Navalny (see CHALLENGE editorial), Venezuela’s Juan Guaido, and Biden himself, Suu Kyi is part of a global dead-end misleadership. Putting our hopes in any of these liberal bosses will only lead us down the road to supporting the U.S. rulers’ inter-imperialist fight against China to dominate the world’s resources and labor.

Workers have no stake in this fight

The lesson of Myanmar is that there are no good bosses. “Ethnic and religious minority groups who have experienced repeated violence at the hands of the Tatmadaw for decades...saw little change under Aung San Suu Kyi’s NLD” (Foreign Policy, 2/10).

But these are not the only choices for the working class! Workers in Asia, from China to Vietnam to Myanmar, have a strong tradition of fighting imperialism under communist leadership. But when workers made the mistake of embracing nationalism, their tremendous sacrifices were squandered by a new group of local bosses. It is time to fight for the real alternative, an international communist party: Progressive Labor Party. PLP is organizing to turn the bosses’ imperialist fights into revolution to liberate the working class. Join us!☛

Crush racist parasites that live off of homeless workers

NEW YORK CITY, February 12— Capitalism makes sure that exploitation and profiteering are ever present even as homelessness becomes just another business.

“Man, I feel like there’s some exploitation going on here. I feel it!”

That is what one of the more than 250 homeless men, almost all Black, told a Progressive Labor Party (PLP) comrade last July, after New York City (NYC) officials moved them into the Lucerne Hotel for emergency lodging during the Covid-19 pandemic (see CHALLENGE, 12/4/2020 and 10/22/2020).

New York City spends in excess of \$2 billion yearly to shelter providers to serve the more than 80,000 homeless New Yorkers. Much of this money is doled out to so-called nonprofits, no matter which political party is in power. While there are at least 20,000 homeless children and 97 percent of those in shelters are Black and Latin, the “dogooder” leaders of many of these “nonprofits” make salaries of hundreds of thousands of dollars. The murderous inequality on every level, alongside the wealth of Wall St. and Billionaire’s Row, enforced by racist police terror, cries out for an end to the profit system with communist revolution. Communism would eliminate all homelessness immediately.

Gov’t enables nonprofit corruption

Recent events have shed some light on NYC’s \$2 billion “homeless industry,” where business is booming! The Doe Fund is a nonprofit that works with formerly incarcerated and homeless people. While providing shelter, it also supplies local business improvement districts (BIDs) with an army of minimum-wage sanitation workers that sweep the streets, clean the parks and deliver meals to hotels during the pandemic. This work used to be done by City workers with union contracts. The BIDs pay \$12/hr., less than the \$15 minimum wage. They would have to pay over three times as much for private sanitation. The Doe Fund makes up the \$3/hr. difference in workers’ checks but gets back twice as much by charging the workers \$249/week to cover coronavirus expenses (PPE), food, clothing and vocational training.

“It’s feudalism, pure exploitation,” one DoE Fund worker in the program said. “They receive money from the city and private donors, and they take money from us. A thousand dollars a month.



Where is it going?” (The Appeal, 7/29/20)

Let’s take a look where it goes. The “non-profit” Doe Fund took in \$54 million more in revenue than it spent in 2019. Founders George McDonald (who died on January 26) and his wife (Harriet-Karr McDonald) collect salaries of \$400,000 each. His son draws \$308,000 and his stepdaughter more than \$100,000 (Dana Rubinstein, Politico, 11/7/19). McDonald is also the Doe Fund’s landlord, collecting \$17,000/month in office rent (Politico). The Doe Fund owns a number of apartment buildings across the City, but they are not available to the workers in the program.

Another profiteering, corrupt “nonprofit” is the Bronx Parent Housing Network (BPHN). On February 7, Victor Rivera, its CEO was fired and is now facing a criminal investigation after The New York Times reported that 10 women, both staff and women living in the shelter system, accused him of sexual assault. One woman had formally filed a complaint with the City, only to have it referred back to the BPHN, who dismissed it. Rivera is also accused of nepotism (unlike McDonald), directing contracts to friends and mixing his non-profit with his for-profit businesses (NYT, 2/7/21). The complaints of sexual assault by 10 women and financial corruption did not stop NYC officials

from paying him about \$275 million since 2017.

The working class needs communism

NYC is a showcase for a capitalist system that doesn’t work and needs to be replaced. Thousands of available hotels and office buildings remain empty, yet the number of homeless is rising along with tens of thousands of workers trying to survive the pandemic on poverty wages. Not so ironically, NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio wanted to send the homeless workers in the Lucerne Hotel to a homeless shelter in the Wall St. area, the home of the bankers and businessmen who have gotten richer during the pandemic while increasing poverty. Now Citibank billionaire Ray McGuire is running for Mayor to try to save NYC for the rich. We need communist revolution to take back the whole world for the working class.

The real-estate developers and the financiers that invest in luxury housing, the bankers and their politicians; it’s this capitalist class who are responsible for homelessness and mass incarceration. We can end homelessness as soon as we overthrow capitalism. Communist revolution will mean a society run by and for the working class. ☺

Chicago: students need schools for communism

Continued from page 1

Weekly, 2/16). More than 40 percent of positive cases among children are among Latin students (CBS Chicago, 1/15).

The racism that the capitalist bosses use against mostly Black and immigrant workers is the cutting edge of the attacks that they use to drive down the standards of the entire working class.

Our efforts soon plugged into a groundswell of fightback that spread across the city.

Small conversation threads soon expanded into networks of hundreds of parents and concerned workers, leading to caravans, petitions, student “sickouts,” and virtual press conferences. Although CTU and CPS have recently reached an agreement to return to school, the solidarity and class consciousness built during the past month will give us momentum moving forward to continue fighting.

U.S. Big Fascists push to get their house in order to prep for war

The call to reopen schools in Chicago is in

lockstep with the plan that new U.S. President Joe Biden—and the dominant Big Fascist wing of the U.S. ruling class he represents—have laid out clearly in recent addresses. (See glossary, page 6.)

They talk about reopening schools as a vehicle to prevent the academic achievement gap from widening, but this is a racist lie. They created the achievement gap through racist disinvestment, profit-driven standardized testing and deadly school closings.

As the liberal Big Fascists nationally scramble to discipline the domestically-oriented Small Fascist wing who flexed their muscle in the recent Capitol siege, they are also plagued with the struggle of reviving a stalling economy. Pretending things are “all good” and forcing the schools back open is a key component for that plan.

Chicago’s economy has taken a big hit during the pandemic. With double-digit unemployment and the bosses losing millions in profit, the city’s capitalists have launched an offensive to get things “back and running.” Even with the threat of more contagious and deadly Covid-19 variants, bars and restaurants have reopened.

The Big Fascists like Biden and Chicago Mayor

Lori Lightfoot know that failing to reopen the schools also presents a long-term political problem for them. They need working-class youth physically in the buildings in order to better reestablish loyalty and patriotism in their build-up to future imperialist war with China. All reforms and calls to unity that the liberal bosses make must be viewed through the lens of saving their racist and sexist world empire.

Only communist education serves the masses

The unity and fightback that has grown between working-class parents, education workers and students is a powerful development, which PLP is committed to continue building. But ultimately, if our unity is channeled into reforming the capitalist system, we will always lack the educational equality and opportunities that the working class needs and deserves.

Education can be wielded to serve the masses only if it is freed from the chains of capital. PLP invites all workers to fight for communism and a lifetime of revolutionary learning. ☺

Haiti: this is capitalist democracy in crisis

HAITI, February 14—The Haitian working class is once again facing a political and economic crisis, mired in widespread violence unleashed by an emboldened president. There were mass demonstrations over the last year demanding that President Jovenel Moïse step down on February 7, the end of his constitutional mandate, culminating in a nationwide general strike that shut everything down. But this was not enough to force Moïse out.

The U.S. and other imperialists support this criminal because he is useful to them. Haiti was crucial in the U.S. ouster of Venezuela from the Organization of American States (OAS) and Moïse continued the opening of Haiti to foreign business interests. The arrogant Moïse celebrated his success by travelling to the Jacmel carnival festivities on February 8.

The anti-government demonstrations are being led by the opposition parties who have positioned themselves as reformers of Haitian society. While many of the people involved in the anti-government movement believe they can improve conditions, the main opposition groups, led by judges and government reformers, are looking to be the new Haitian ruling class. Supporting a new lesser-evil capitalist ruling class will not liberate the working class.

This has been tried over and over. Haiti has had numerous governments in the 28 years since the end of the Duvalier dictatorships, with only two presidents serving their complete terms (Reuters, 10/11/19). But the same capitalist exploitation and corruption remains.

We are working to build Progressive Labor Party and the struggle for communist revolution as we fight back against the attacks of the Moïse government.

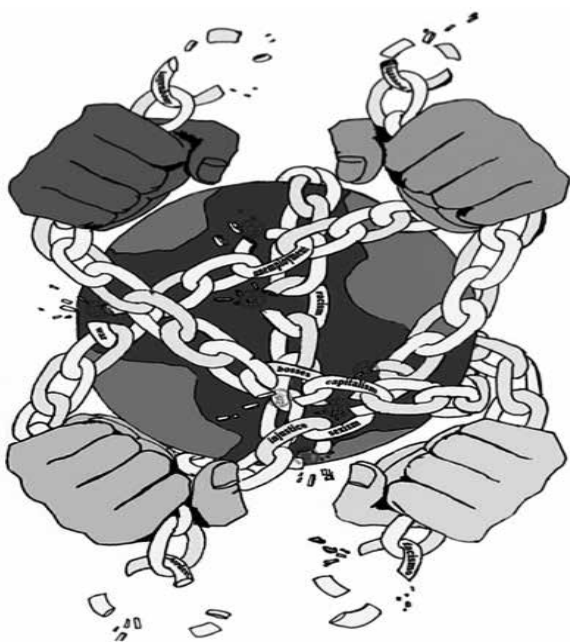
These days there is even more widespread

instability as Moïse has armed street gangs and militias to create an atmosphere of mass terror. There are assassinations of known opposition organizers and a kidnapping spree of opposition organizers as well as ordinary workers. Many have been fired for speaking out against the government. The life of workers here continues to be pure misery. There is raging inflation and an unstable currency exchange rate. With massive un- and underemployment, Haitian workers depend on remittances from their families abroad. In 2019, \$3.55 billion was transferred, up from \$1.5 billion in 2011 (tradingeconomics.com).

Those 2019 remittances accounted for 36 percent of Haiti's GDP. But today, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, many of these remittances are falling off. March 2020 alone saw an 18 percent decline in remittances when the U.S. lost more than 700,000 jobs (Haitian Times, 4/20/2020).

Deepening ties to workers

The Party in Haiti is using the current capitalist crisis to deepen our ties with our base among workers and students. Because of the widespread atmosphere of terror created by the pro-capitalist forces, we are tasked with coming up with creative ways to continue to meet with our friends, sharpen our discussions and respond to their questions about



our line. We are also becoming more creative in putting our line out in a mass way under the current conditions. Furthermore, we are strengthening our own resolve as communist revolutionaries.

Some of our newer comrades and friends are not yet steered in fighting the bosses on many fronts. We are trying to address their own unease and conflicts, pointing out that our strength and courage comes from relying on our collective wisdom and experience of our Party. We are learning from those revolutionaries who have preceded us, and from our class. We understand the dangers that we and the working class face from our capitalist enemies, but we are not standing down. We will face our class enemy and grow our Party in the process. ✊

Mexico: capitalist healthcare fails workers

MEXICO, February 16—In December, intent on projecting an image of control over the health crisis, the president of Mexico, Andrés Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO), presented a vaccination plan for the country.

The first stage would consist of immunization of all healthcare workers, and the second, would pursue vaccination of 15 million older adults concluding in March. Until yesterday, only a little more than 700 thousand people have been vaccinated, which does not even cover all employees in the health sector (Expansion Politica, 2/10).

On display is the liberal deception of AMLO's self-proclaimed fourth transformation, which in reality has taken advantage of his power to maintain his party's position and to militarize the country by deploying the National Guard. The only transformation that will serve the needs of the working class is communist revolution.

Just as the pandemic unmasks capitalism's reign of terror, the vaccine program demonstrates capitalism's complete inability to meet the working class' basic needs. But more deeply it reveals that under capitalism profits matter more than workers' health. Capitalism cannot hide its criminal nature. Today it is more evident that it's a matter of life and death to fight for communism: a society that serves the workers, where our health is a social priority not a profit margin.

Capitalism gutted healthcare system

Mexico's national healthcare system claims to guarantee access to health care for all those living in the country. But in reality, for 40 years the health structure has been abandoned to give rise to privatization turning healthcare into one more commodity of the capitalist system. The Covid-19 crisis made this situation even more visible,



demonstrating the mercenary nature of the system. Today hospital saturation of 100 percent and a massive rate of infection continues to devastate the working class (Milenio, 2/8). This crisis intensified recently in January. Given the overflow of hospitals and the near impossibility of finding oxygen tanks due to excessive pricing, many infected people suffered the disease untreated from home (New York Times, 2/9).

The same corrupt incompetence defines the "vaccination strategy." The politicians closest to the president, like Marcelo Ebrad, Minister of Foreign Affairs, announced with great fanfare the contracts with Pfizer and AstraZeneca for the acquisition of their vaccines. Two months later Mexico's vaccination coverage is abysmal. Ebrad is one of the leading candidates to succeed López Obrador along with Claudia Sheinbaum, the Mayor of Mexico City. Both try to present themselves as the most competent officials to face the pandemic, but they can't escape the reality of an overwhelmed healthcare system.

The AMLO government claims to have contracted for more than 200 million doses of vaccine, but to date, not even 1 percent of the 125 million inhabitants of the country have been vaccinated. The government says it has 10,000 vaccination brigades made up of the military and the so-called servants of the nation. But these brigades, whose 12 person teams include only two healthcare workers, are more likely to solicit the vote for Morena, the ruling party, and create a National Guard presence on the streets than provide vaccinations (Mexico Daily News, 1/6).

Bosses turn vaccines into a commodity

Under capitalism vaccines, like housing and food, are commodities rather than a human necessity. Pharmaceutical have increased several times over their market value. As a result, vaccine distribution will be motivated primarily by purchasing power rather than disease prevention. Under capitalism this will undoubtedly mean that the poorest sections of the working class will be last to receive the vaccine. Once again, capitalism has demonstrated its inability to manage this crisis.

The Covid-19 pandemic has made it clear that workers are disposable under this system where the only thing that matters is the profits of the capitalists. The consequences are lethal for the working class with almost 2.4 million deaths in the world by February 13 (World Health Organization). Mexico ranks third in the world with 171,000 official deaths and many more uncounted. The management of the pandemic has been a disaster in Mexico, as in the rest of the world. The Progressive Labor Party continues to call on workers to reject the deception that elections can lead to workers power and change this exploitative system. Let's fight for workers' power, communism. ✊

KKKOPS OUT OF SCHOOLS!



Smash racist capitalism and fight for communism where education means liberating the youth to realize their full potential.

PRINCE GEORGE%S COUNTY, MD, February 11—Six months of antiracist organizing have led the county’s Board of Education (BOE) chair to unilaterally cancel the meeting that would vote on whether or not to remove cops out of schools. The rebellions after the racist murder of George Floyd ignited a local campaign to get armed police out of our county schools. Capitalism uses police as agents of social control in our neighborhoods, jobs, and schools, using their power to put our kids into a school-to-jail pipeline.

“COUNSELORS NOT COPS!” has been the rallying cry of antiracists here. Progressive Labor Party (PLP), in helping lead the fight against racist police brutality in the county since the 1970s, plays a significant role in this campaign.

The BOE chair used the pretense of “investigating contracts” to cancel the meeting. The chair, intimidated by the struggle, was trying to intimidate angry residents and the board members who will vote to remove SROs (School Resource Officers). This is what “democracy” under capitalism looks like. But we are not backing down!

Cops in schools make students unsafe

The campaign against SROs began with a virtual program in August featuring many antiracist supporters of PLP. A group of public health advocates also joined with MORE in launching the program.

Many factors go into making schools unsafe for Black and Latin students. At the program, public defenders showed the disparate number of arrests of Black students. In past years, the school, not the police, would have handled disciplinary problems. According to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), “Nationally, Black students are more than twice as likely as their white classmates to be referred to law enforcement” (7/9/2020). A criminal record jeopardizes a student’s financial aid, college admission, and future jobs.

Instead of an environment of support, the school’s priority is to create an atmosphere of racist intimidation. Police outnumber nurses and social workers in schools. Instead of racist cops, the mass campaign demanded more mental health resources.

While resources are important and needed,

additional support staff won’t solve the stresses and racism of capitalism. Smashing capitalism through communist revolution and erecting an egalitarian, collective society will eliminate this psychologically damning system.

Beware of liberal wolves

The antiracists ratcheted up the campaign with an online petition, an informational website, and a letter writing campaign to the BOE.

However, in an earlier meeting, the BOE voted 8-6 to keep cops in the schools. Alvin Thornton, a Howard professor and “progressive” educational organizer, who had previously created policy for equity in educational funding, actually voted with the majority to keep the cops. Beware of liberal wolves in sheep’s clothing!

The anti-SRO campaign continued into the election season. Two new members who favored removing the SROs were elected and a new chair was appointed. Other groups in the county held additional programs and rallies during this time. A letter to the editor written by a PLP member had 26 organizations sign on to the campaign.

In response to the growing campaign, the CEO of the school system created an online survey of teachers and County residents about the SRO program. A PLP member exposed the bias in the survey, which led to a widely-distributed criticism of the survey on Facebook and email lists.

Three days before the vote, we again produced a virtual program on Zoom and Facebook. One speaker, a teacher of 29 years, explained how she had shifted from believing in Zero Tolerance Policies to supporting Restorative Justice efforts, which treat students with unmet behavioral needs like human beings who are growing during high school.

Members of the campaign worked closely with the advocates on the School Board, holding weekly meetings and working through committees so that it was ready for a vote on February 11. Several had signed up to testify at this now-cancelled meeting.

It is clear that communists can have an antiracist effect on the mass class struggle. However, class struggle in and of itself is not enough (see historical article on page 7). We must also win people to join, support, and promote communist ideas and PLP.

The willingness of the capitalists and their agents to use police for social control was evident to the political base of PLP. They agreed that if the BOE approves this policy, racist repression in the schools would continue.

The role of the Black politicians who lead the county is also obvious. From County Executive Angela Alsobrooks who blocked the reopening of the murdered-by-cops Archie Elliott III case (CHALLENGE, 7/25/2018), to Vice President Kamala Harris, a vicious prosecutor who sought to arrest parents for truant children, the election of “progressive” Black politicians are hollow “victories” for this Black majority county. These politicians use identity politics to pacify working-class fightback and further racist policies.

Defeat racist propaganda

Years of attacking Black and Latin youth have led some residents to accept the racist ideas from the capitalist media. Many parents who have bought into this false ideology are afraid of sending children to public schools. Black, as well as white and Latin, families sometimes share this fear. Instead of trusting students, helping them mature, and developing more collective approaches to discipline, the solution arising from racist ideas is to hammer them with police.

Building a different society requires reimagining education and restorative justice, providing real learning opportunities, and supporting students with higher needs.

But capitalism has no interest in providing that kind of education for our class. Schools are a sorting hat for the next generation of class relations—managers, goons, mouth pieces, and apologists for capitalism; the researchers and scientists working in the interest of profit and imperialism; the workers; the reserve army of workers; and the soldiers. The role of school is training students to accept, obey, and internalize the rules of this exploitation-based society.

Only a communist society that values all children can offer a future that encourages all students to learn and master skills and contribute to everyone’s quality of life.☺

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Gorman’s poem whitewashes U.S. history

I don't like poetry stuffed with clichés. And, as a communist, I detest the deeply hypocritical American Exceptionalist doctrine that the United States is the standard-bearer for freedom and justice around the world. So while the mass media have been swooning over Amanda Gorman's delivery of her poem "The Hill We Climb" at the January 20 Presidential inauguration, I have been gritting my teeth.

Advocate of liberal multiculturalism were overjoyed that this young Black woman proclaimed the U.S. to be "benevolent but bold, fierce and free," and that the legacy of "our forefathers" who "first realized revolution" is one worth celebrating. But the poem's central metaphor of "the hill we climb" recalls the famous "City on the Hill" invoked by Puritan John Winthrop before the "settlement" of Boston in 1630 (and subsequent genocide of the indigenous inhabitants of Massachusetts).

This image of the U.S. as a glorious model for the rest of the world to look up to and worship has over the centuries figured as the supreme expression of American Exceptionalism. The "City on the Hill" would be repeatedly invoked in the 1980s by none other than quintessentially racist and imperialist Ronald Reagan. The metaphor announced in the poem's title is hardly politically innocent.

The media's talking heads just *loved* Gorman's poem because it reaffirmed the false—but oh so consoling—belief that the U.S. was not and is not based upon racist exploitation and oppression; that U.S. "democracy" is alive and well; that, in the wake of the Donald Trump years, "we" will "raise this wounded world into a wondrous one."

Gorman's delivery of the poem on the steps of the Capitol did the job "Hamilton" has done on Broadway over the past several years—namely, to whitewash U.S. history.

★★★★★

Bosses' forum admits the threat of world war

Both Russian and Chinese leaders, Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping, made statements at the Davos World Economic Forum that the growing threat of trade wars

and conflicts points to a heightened likelihood of war on a global scale. From Syria and Iran to Afghanistan, from the South China Sea to Venezuela, from Africa to Haiti, political, economic, and military conflicts are taking on more ominous threats to humanity.

The pandemic and its ensuing economic crisis sharpened contradictions between the three great imperialist powers of today: the United States, Russia, and China. U.S. economic and military power, while still dominant, is quickly receding as its rival China expands its economic grip on world commerce. It has successfully extended its influence in Africa, Latin America, and Asia with its infamous 'Belt and Road Initiative.' As a result of this new pressure, U.S. imperialism is desperate to resort to military conflict while it still has the upper hand. The split in the ruling class between the imperialist finance capitalists and domestic capitalist rivals has yet to be resolved.

Progressive Labor Party says workers' blood should not be shed in support of the power struggles, both internal and global, of these capitalist scum. Their interest is furthering the accumulation of profits through never-ending exploitation of workers, unsafe working conditions and ultimately, another global war that will threaten the lives of hundreds of millions of workers on six continents.

It is our responsibility to educate our working-class brothers and sisters of the serious nature of this real threat and share that the only real solution to our problems is a communist revolution led by the international Progressive Labor Party.

Concretely, this also means distributing and discussing the content of our Party newspaper CHALLENGE. We must increase party-led study groups to recruit many, more workers to build PLP into the mass leadership of our class. We must take off our blinders and realize opportunity and necessity have synthesized to build the mass party we have talked about for years. We cannot rest on our laurels. The rise of fascism, racism, and global war requires our total effort.

Ask each reader to join a party study group. Be creative. Write for CHALLENGE. No matter how “feeble” you think your skills are, write the articles. Your comrades are here to help. Recruit, Recruit, Recruit! Smash imperialist war with the communist revolution!

★★★★★

Glossary:
communist
political terms

Fascism

Capitalism's response to a crisis of their system, when the bosses can no longer sustain the charade of liberal democracy and resort to more direct control and state terror instead. Fascism is marked by the ruling capitalists disciplining their own ranks to serve the urgent needs of the capitalist state and weather the crisis. To defend their system from internal and external threats, they use all the means available in their state apparatus, including violence. To build unity within their class and loyalty from workers, they rely on nationalist politics and calls for sacrifice. Their strategy is to mislead the working class to kill our working class sisters and brothers in the next inter-imperialist war.

Big Fascists

The Big Fascists are the dominant finance capitalist faction of the U.S. ruling class. They represent the wealthiest and most powerful bosses in the U.S., including multinational banks like Chase and Citibank, multinational oil companies like ExxonMobil, the big automakers, Boeing, Amazon, and the major media companies. As the dominant grouping since World War II, the Big Fascists were the architects of the liberal world order with the U.S. bosses on top. Their dominance rests on U.S. financial and military power and its strategic control of the Middle East and the flow of oil to Europe, Asia, and Africa. To sustain this dominance, they need to rebuild a huge, multiracial military for inter-imperialist war, most likely with China.

Small Fascists

The Small Fascists are a group of domestically oriented U.S. capitalists who are challenging the Big Fascists over the direction of U.S. imperialism. Since their interests are less tied to controlling the flow of oil, they are against heavy taxation to keep troops in the Middle East and in general oppose costly military bases and invasions. They're willing to rely on a smaller, whiter army, backed by nuclear weapons and the Air Force. They have used open racism to build a political following.

Germany: how fascism developed in a liberal democracy

Germany in the 1920s was a liberal democracy. Within a few years, that same society was killing millions of workers led by the Nazi Party. The causes of the holocaust, resulting in nearly 12 million people systemically killed, were a response to capitalism in crisis and showed that the only future for our class, the working class, is a communist revolution.

If we fail to understand this fact and instead accept liberal myths of Adolf Hitler's evil as the cause, we will not understand how liberal capitalism today will follow down a similar path as German liberalism of the 1920s.

The communist economist R. Palme Dutt in 1934, five years before the start of World War II and eight years before the mass cremations started, understood the needs of capitalism in crisis to destroy not just excess machinery and food that starving people could not afford to buy, but to destroy the people themselves.

“For war is only the complete and most systematic working out of the process of destruction. Today they are burning wheat and grain, the means of human life. Tomorrow they will be burning living human bodies”(Fascism and Social Revolution, Dutt). Dutt was prophetic in predicting the ovens of the holocaust, yet his prediction wasn't based on the evils of Hitler, but on the needs of the capitalists.

Capitalism in crisis needs
fascism

German capitalism in the 1930s was in extreme crisis. The German ruling class was defeated in World War I and the Great Depression that ravaged the capitalist countries at the time had caused massive unemployment as factories sat idle because the working class was unable to buy anything. Milk and wheat were systematically destroyed rather than given away to starving people. Dutt correctly pointed out that those decisions had nothing to do with some existential “evil” but everything to do with the capitalists trying to prop up food prices. Systematically killing people was the predictable next step for a society that saw the working class as expendable.

The politics of Nazism and the mass acceptance of the holocaust intertwined with the needs of capitalism. The politics and the actions fed off of each other. The politics of fascism grew more openly barbaric as the crisis and chaos of the system sharpened. Liberals became fascists because lacking confidence in the possibility of anything other than capitalism, they desperately sought to justify, or at a minimum ignore, what was happening.

The understanding of how liberalism becomes fascism is desperately relevant today. We need look no further than present-day New York to see before our own eyes tens of thousands of workers left to die from the coronavirus. The capitalists put their resources into propping up the stock market instead of protecting the working class. Thousands died while the Dow Jones hit record heights.

Liberal politicians pave the way
to fascism

The capitalists acting to protect their interests was predictable. The bigger problem was the acceptance by so many of the daily lies told by politicians like Andrew Cuomo that there was little else that could've been done. As the bodies piled up in freezer trucks, Cuomo, promoted by CNN, the New York Times, and the like, fed us lie after lie. The acceptance of Cuomo as the hero of New York City liberals is the warning we should all heed.

In the deadly drama that played out of a terrified middle and upper class looking for something to latch onto, we saw how today's liberalism becomes tomorrow's fascism.

Hitler became the driving force in German politics after the 1932 election when the Nazi Party received 37 percent of the vote (Who Voted for Hitler, 1980). The Nazi strongholds in that election were in the wealthy neighborhoods of Germany's most liberal cities.

“It is a point of some irony that the educated upper- and upper-middle-class populations, who react so enthusiastically to the claims of mass-society theories, should themselves have been the victims of a process that they, with such evident disdain, assume to be moving other people. In this case, it would appear that the demagogues, with some aid from the media, had considerable success in moving the upper- and upper-middle class masses” (Who Voted For Hitler).

Workers: reject fascism with
communism

While it is easy for many people to see the obvious and call Trump a fascist, the bigger threat to the working class is in large numbers of wealthy liberals defending the coming atrocities of war and extermination when carried out by one of their own champions such as Joe Biden or Kamala Harris. The bosses will spare no expense in hiring proxies to try to bring the working class along to comply with our own destruction.

The lesson of the German Holocaust and what we are seeing now is the folly of following the ruling class. The path forward in the face of capitalism's crisis is with the working class and the fight for communist revolution.☺

Book Review

Lessons from past communist organizing in Wisconsin



Stalin Over Wisconsin: The Making and Unmaking of Militant Unionism, 1900–1950 by Stephen Meyer documents the struggle to organize the Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing Company in Wisconsin. At its peak, the factory employed over 10,000 workers. In 1935 the Communist Party (CP) and United Auto Workers (UAW) both sought to organize the workers resulting in a red witch hunt that brought to light the limits of reform struggles and the need for a united and militant working-class revolution worldwide.

Role of the CPUSA

In 1935, the Communist Party took a direct role in the organizing campaign. They began to meet with workers from the plant to plan the campaign. However, in the book, Meyers makes no clear statement that any of the workers in the plant were members of the Communist Party. The company constantly attacked the worker's organizing efforts as communist-led as did the AFL unions that had members in the plants. But the CPUSA did not respond to this red-baiting nor did it explain why communist leadership was important.

John Blair, an Allis-Chalmers worker and a communist, believed there were about 100 party members in the plant and most of them were shop floor leaders. The book gives no indication of what it meant to be a CP member other than to organize the fight against the bosses and to provide leadership in the 1939, 1941, and 1946 strikes.

Throughout various campaigns, Allis-Chalmers refused to create a union shop. They insisted on an absolute right to terminate workers at their discretion. Their only concession was to give workers a written explanation for their termination.

The 1941 strike was the most successful. This was helped by the National War Labor Board which ordered the company to withhold union dues from members' checks and send them to the union. It shifted the balance of power in the plant by establishing an independent arbitrator to settle grievances. Allis-Chalmers management would no longer have the final say in worker discipline. It did not resolve disputes over wages and job classifications.

Issue of racism

The UAW Local 248 took on the issue of racism. It supported the 1941 march on Washington for jobs in the defense industries for Black workers. They also protested the requirement that Black sailors wear an "N" insignia to indicate they were "Negroes" in a letter to the Secretary of the Navy. The Local supported the efforts of R. J. Thomas, the international president of the UAW in his efforts to integrate some Detroit locals. At Allis-Chalmers in 1941, there were 141 Black workers. This grew to 693 by 1945. The Local fought for the advancement of Black workers in the plants. Luther McBride, a Black worker, was a shop steward who helped lead this fight.

Harry Christoffel, the local president, was determined by management to not be an essential worker and he was then drafted into the Army in 1944.

When WWII ended and the U.S.-Soviet alliance ended, there began a vigorous attack on unions that were considered to be influenced by the Communist Party. Local 248 was considered one of the unions that communists were in the leadership of. This set the stage for an 11-month strike in 1946-

47.

At the start of the strike, 11,000 workers walked off the job. But at the same time, in Wisconsin and around the country there was a growing anti-communist sentiment. Joseph Mc Carthy was elected senator from Wisconsin and the Taft-Hartley Act was passed. The Act prevented members of the Communist Party from being on the union negotiating committee or being a union officer.

The leadership of Local 248 was unprepared. The attacks came not only from the company and right wing politicians but also from Walter Reuther and other national leaders of the CIO. After 11 months, the workers returned to work without a contract. Over 80 rank and file strike leaders were fired by the company and put on a blacklist by other local employers.

The key lessons

The red-baiting by the company and various AFL unions were never seriously addressed, so the workers were vulnerable to these attacks. There was also no clear understanding of what it meant to be a communist. These are mistakes of the old communist movement and that is this PLP fights to expose the misleadership of union leaders and make revolution primary over reform. We cannot hide communism from the workers.

Christoffel never admitted to being a communist. He was convicted in 1950 of lying to a Senate committee. After a series of appeals, he spent three years in jail, being released in 1956.

Did the 100 or so party members in the plant have a clear understanding of Marxism-Leninism and the need for a revolutionary party? The book does not address any of these questions.

The closest it comes is a quote from Christoffel at the 50th anniversary of the founding of Local 248 in 1986. He stated, "To hell with the nickel. I am interested in much more than that. I want to make a better world..."

Winning workers to a communist vision of the future and fighting for it by building the party must be one's main goal.☸



RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

U.S. Supreme Court legalizes police lies

NYT—Police officers in the United States are permitted by law to outright lie about evidence to suspects they interrogate in pursuit of a confession....

In...1969, the Supreme Court made it lawful for the police to present false evidence. "The victim's blood was found on your pillow"; "You failed the polygraph"; "Your fingerprints were on the knife"... are some common brazen lies told. There is almost no limit to the type or magnitude of deception permitted...lies aimed at adults or anxious and unwary teenagers....

In the database of the Innocence Project, false confessions contributed to convictions in 29 percent of its 375 DNA exonerations....of these wrongful convictions originated in New York State, 45 percent...involved false confessions.

...Homicide detectives interrogated George Whitmore, a 19-year-old African-American man and produced an exquisitely detailed 61-page confession to [the 1963 "career girl murders"]...and other crimes.

Whitmore signed the confession attributed to him but later recanted. It turned out that...he had been with friends on the South Jersey shore watching the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's historic "I Have a Dream" speech televised from the Lincoln Memorial. After spending nine years in and out of prison, he was finally exonerated of all charges....

Twenty-five years later, the Central Park jogger case elicited five false confessions....

[In 1988] 17-year-old Martin Tankleff woke

up...to find his mother laying in her bloodied bed and his father slumped in his bloodied study chair.... Mr. Tankleff called 911...After hours of accusations and denials, the lead detective launched into a series of lies...culminated in a staged phone call [telling]...Mr. Tankleff...that his father had regained consciousness...[but] his father had said Mr. Tankleff was his attacker. Both statements were untrue...

Mr. Tankleff became disoriented and lost his grip on reality...and broke down and confessed, then almost immediately recanted, after which he was tried and convicted. Eighteen years later, his conviction was vacated...

In August, for the first time since Gallup began tracking the question 27 years ago, a majority of Americans said they lacked confidence in the police.

India: armed farmers fight Modi's pro-profit laws

NYT—[A] months long deadlock between protesting farmers and the government of Narendra Modi erupted into a dramatic confrontation that paralyzed [New Delhi]...left one farmer dead and hundreds of police officers wounded....

The government has enacted market-friendly laws...but increasingly desperate farmers say the changes will worsen their plight....The farmers clash[ed] with the police, destroying barricades...storming...a 400-year-old landmark....Many protestors were injured as well....Farmers in other parts of the country have held rallies in solidarity....The protest has laid bare the dire reality of inequality across much of the country. More than 60 percent of India's 1.3 billion people still depend

primarily on agriculture for their livelihood....For years, debts and bankruptcies have driven farmers to high rates of suicide....

The demonstrators are demanding Modi repeal recent farming laws that...open more space for private investors...fearing...[they will] leave them at the mercy of greedy corporations....Farmers...used tractors to dismantle police barricades. Many farmers carried long swords, tridents, sharp daggers and battle axes....Police...deployed...assault rifles....aimed at the crowds...and beat back protestors with their batons....

"We are not going back — that is not in our genetic code," said Ringhu Yaspal, 32.... "Agriculture has turned into a slow poison. It's better to die fighting here."

Women prisoners suffer barbaric conditions in the U.S.

NYT— Trimeka Rollins's daughter, 24, ...has been shuffled from one men's prison to another, facing abuse at both...before finally being transferred...to the state's only lockup for women....

"We thought it would be a little different," Ms. Rollins said. "It was worse."

In a Jan. 11 incident...her daughter was handcuffed and beaten so badly by four guards that ligaments ripped in her knee,...forcing her to use a wheelchair.It is the latest episode in a year's long pattern of inmate abuse by guards at the...western New Jersey....A report...found that inmates...were regularly sexually assaulted by guards....[In] a New Jersey jail in Cumberland County seven inmates died by suicide between 2015 and 2018.

1940s Langston Hughes

ANTIRACIST WRITER & COMMUNIST

This is part one of a three-part series on Hughes.

Langston Hughes was the premier 20th-century poet for the U.S. working class, and particularly Black workers. He spoke to their dreams of a world without racism and the harsh realities of Jim Crow and pervasive segregation. Born in 1901 in Joplin, Missouri, and raised in the Midwest, Hughes spent his early 20s attending colleges, working on ships, and traveling through West Africa and Europe. He became one of the leading artists of the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920’s, when writers, musicians, painters, sculptors, actors, historians, sociologists, and activists made Harlem a dynamic center for culture and politics. Even the Depression of the 1930’s could not dampen this creative environment for Black artists, thinkers, and organizers.

The 1930’s was also the decade when many well-known artists embraced communist ideas in their quest to end the racist inequalities of capitalism. In 1932, Hughes went to the Soviet Union with a group of Black artists and filmmakers to create a film about Black life and racism in the U.S. South. (The project was canceled after Franklin Roosevelt recognized the Soviet Union in the film footage) Later Hughes traveled to Spain for the Baltimore Afro-American, a weekly newspaper, to cover the anti-fascist struggle in the Spanish Civil War. This was the period of his most radical poetry, much of it submitted to New Masses, a weekly edited by members of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA). One of his most famous was “Good Morning Revolution,” which Hughes wrote in 1932. It openly calls for a society run by and for the working class. Here are some excerpts:

*Good-morning, Revolution:
You're the very best friend I ever had
We gonna pal around
together from now on.*

*...
Listen, Revolution,
We're buddies, see –
Together,
We can take everything:
Factories, arsenals, houses, ships,
Railroads, forests, fields, orchards,
Bus lines, telegraphs, radios,
(Jesus! Raise hell with radios!)
Steel mills, coal mines, oil wells, gas,
All the tools of production,
(Great day in the morning!)
Everything –
And turn 'em over
to the people who work.
Rule and run 'em
for us people who work.*

The political ground shifted in the 1940s, as the CPUSA focused less on communist revolution and more on building an anti-fascist united front to defeat Germany in World War II. Black workers and communists advanced the “Double V” goal—victory against the fascists in Europe and victory against segregation at home. In 1942, Hughes was hired by the Chicago Defender, another prominent Black newspaper. His columns attacked the racist abuse of Black soldiers stationed in the South, which Hughes compared to Nazi Germany. In a February 26, 1944 column, Hughes described a Black soldier just returned to the U.S. from fighting overseas. The soldier suffered from “Jim Crow shock, too much discrimination—segregation-fatigue which, to a sensitive Negro, can be just as damaging as days of



Langston Hughes was put on trial before the House of Un-American Activities for his pro-communist stance.

heavy air bombardment.” In August 1943, when a Black soldier was shot and wounded by a cop after a fracas at the Braddock Hotel at West 126 Street, the rumor spread that the soldier had been killed. In the ensuing rebellion, stores were looted and property damage was estimated at up to \$5 million. Six thousand National Guardsmen were called in and over 600 people were arrested. (See Dominic J. Capeci, Jr., The Harlem Riot of 1943, Philadelphia: 1977.)

To Hughes, the politics of the incident were clear. In his August 14, 1943, Chicago Defender column addressed to “White Shopkeepers Who Own Stores in Negro Neighborhoods,” Hughes wrote:

The damage to your stores is primarily a protest against the whole rotten system of Jim Crow ghettos, Jim Crow cars, and Jim Crow treatment of Negro soldiers. But, you say, you are not responsible for those Jim Crow conditions. Why should your windows be broken? They shouldn't. I am sorry they are. But I can tell you WHY they are broken.” Hughes goes on to cite Black workers' grievances, from racist unemployment to price gouging and substandard housing.

He ends by observing:
I do not believe in mob violence as a solution for social problems. But I do understand what it is that makes many young people in Negro neighborhoods an easy prey to that desperate desire born of frustration—to which you contribute—to hurl a brick through a window.

In his book-length poem suite, Montage of a Dream Deferred (1951), Hughes included the poem “Harlem,” which expresses visceral sensations of pent-up rage:



*What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over
like a syrupy sweet
Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.
Or does it explode?*

In the late 1940s, as the U.S. capitalist rulers vied for world supremacy against the communist Soviet Union, the bosses’ federal government led the charge to investigate and harass members of the Communist Party USA. In January 1949, twelve CPUSA leaders, including Black New York City Councilman Benjamin Davis Jr., went on trial for violating the Smith Act by “advocating the violent overthrow of the U.S. government.” Though Hughes never joined the CPUSA, his communist sympathies were clear. The FBI placed him under surveillance. Writing in the Chicago Defender, February 5, 1949, he declared that the trial was...

The most important thing happening in America today . . . because it is your trial—all who question the status quo—who question things as they are—all poor people, Negroes, Jews, un-white Americans, un-rich Americans are on trial. . . . They are being tried because they say it is wrong for anybody—Mexicans, Negroes, Chinese, Japanese, Jews, Armenians—to be segregated in America; because they say it is wrong for anybody to make millions of dollars from any business while the workers in that business do not make enough to save a few hundred dollars to live on when they get old and broken down and unable to work anymore; they are being tried because they do not believe in wars that kill millions of young men and make millions of dollars for those who already have millions of dollars; they are being tried because they believe it is better in peace time to build schools, hospitals, and public power projects than to build warplanes and battleships.

By the 1950s, the bosses’ blacklisting and FBI harassment led many communists and leftists to retreat from open political organizing. But Hughes kept writing for the Chicago Defender until 1962. His bold and lyrical poetry, notably the two poems of One-Way Ticket (1951) that address lynchings in the South, live on as an inspiration to all who struggle against racism and for the international working class.🔴

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